

Given that Narina's Trogon is generally sedentary in West Africa, with, for instance, a pair remaining virtually constantly within a small territory of c.1–2 ha (Collar 2001), our observations suggest that there is a previously unrecorded population in the Dindéfelo area.

Acknowledgements

The activities of the Instituto Jane Goodall España in the study area are funded by Wula Nafaa-USAID Senegal and the Fundación Biodiversidad (Spain). Dr Imad Cherkaoui (SEO / BirdLife Morocco Programme) kindly revised the manuscript.

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Received 31 May 2010; revision accepted 30 March 2011.

First record of Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis* for The Gambia

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Première mention du Goéland à bec cerclé *Larus delawarensis* pour la Gambie. Un Goéland à bec cerclé *Larus delawarensis* a été photographié à Tanji (13°22'N 16°39'W), en Gambie, le 3 décembre 2008. Ceci constitue la deuxième observation documentée pour l'Afrique sub-saharienne, la première ayant été faite dans le Delta du Saloum, Sénégal, en octobre 1985.

In the mid morning of 3 December 2008, during favourable weather conditions, CRB was searching for colour-ringed gulls and terns at the southern end of Tanji Bird Reserve (13°22'N 16°39'W), in Western Division, The Gambia. An unfamiliar medium-sized gull was noticed on the tideline beside a group of mixed aged Grey-headed Gulls *Larus cirrocephalus*. The bird strutted in and out of the shallows, avoiding the large numbers of Lesser Black-backed Gulls *L. fuscus* and a few Kelp Gulls *L. dominicanus* that were also present. A series of digiscoped images was taken and the gull eventually took flight, permitting a distant photograph showing the open wings and tail. His initial thoughts were of a first-winter Common Gull *L. canus*, a Palearctic vagrant to The Gambia with fewer than five modern records (Barlow *et al.* 1997). However, subsequent inspection of the photographs on the computer made him doubt this identification and the photographs were sent

to ASD, who immediately identified the bird as a first-winter Ring-billed Gull *L. delawarensis*, a species that he is very familiar with in the UK. ASD also circulated the images to other gull experts in the UK for comment.

First impressions from the photographs were of a small- to medium-sized gull in first-winter plumage, larger and bulkier than the nearby Grey-headed Gulls. Head and underparts were whitish with extensive smudging and spotting, especially on the lower nape, crown and flanks. The bill pattern was reminiscent of first-winter Glaucous Gull *L. hyperboreus*, the base being pale pink with the other two-thirds being black, apart from a very small amount of pink on the tip; the bill also appeared fairly heavy and robust. The eyes were blackish, and the legs a very similar pink colour to the bill, or slightly paler. Mantle and scapulars were grey (paler than the nearby Grey-headed Gulls in the photograph),



Figures 1–3. First-winter Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis*, Tanji Bird Reserve, Western Division, The Gambia, 3 December 2008 (Clive R. Barlow)

Goéland à bec cerclé *Larus delawarensis*, 1er hiver, Tanji Bird Reserve, Western Division, Gambie, 3 décembre 2008 (Clive R. Barlow)



Figure 4. Adult winter Common Gull *Larus canus*, Norfolk, UK (Jason Waine)

Goéland cendré *Larus canus*, adulte internuptial, Norfolk, Royaume-Uni (Jason Waine)

with conspicuous whitish tips and pale brownish subterminal marks to most of the scapulars, affording the upperparts a distinctive pattern. The brown lesser coverts formed a warm bar, with the lower band of coverts clearly possessing pale notches, bordered by a paler greater covert bar appearing as a pale mid-wing panel at rest and in flight. One retained brown juvenile greater covert clearly had a distinctive notched pattern, while the other grey feathers were newly acquired first-winter feathers. The tertials were brown and quite worn, with one newly acquired grey upper tertial. Primaries were blackish brown with very slightly paler brown fringes to the tips. The tail at rest (Fig. 1) clearly had a dark blackish band with a smudgy dusky area just above it; in flight the dark tail band contrasted clearly with the white rump and rest of the tail (Fig. 3). Furthermore, in flight the pale grey inner primaries and primary-coverts contrasted with the blackish outer primaries and



Figures 5–6. Head and bill of Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis*, The Gambia (Clive R. Barlow) and Common Gull *L. canus*, Norfolk, UK (Jason Waine)

Tête et bec du Goéland à bec cerclé *Larus delawarensis*, Gambie (Clive R. Barlow) et du Goéland cendré *L. canus*, Norfolk, Royaume-Uni (Jason Waine)

primary-coverts, and there was a dark, white-tipped, trailing edge to the inner wing—all of these features are indicative of a first-winter Ring-billed Gull.

The shape and depth of the bill, mantle pattern, notched greater covert and some lesser coverts, pale greater wing-coverts bar, and smudging above



Figure 7. Head and bill of adult winter Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis*, Cornwall, UK (Jason Waine)

Tête et bec du Goéland à bec cerclé *Larus delawarensis*, adulte internuptial, Cornwall, Royaume-Uni (Jason Waine)

the tail band all separated the bird from Common Gull. The combination of the bird's size compared to Grey-headed Gull, pale grey upperparts and the pale greater wing-coverts eliminate the possibility of a small Yellow-legged Gull *L. cachinnans*. This observation is the first record of Ring-billed Gull in The Gambia and the second for sub-Saharan Africa. Two other Nearctic gulls have been recorded in The Gambia; Laughing Gull *L. atricilla* and Franklin's Gull *L. pipixcan*.

Ring-billed Gull breeds in North America, especially in the Great Lakes region, where it is abundant (500,000 pairs) and regularly moves as far south as Mexico in the non-breeding season. Its winter quarters are reached in September (Olsen & Larsson 2004). A record from the Saloum Delta, in Senegal, in 1985 (Baillon 1991), is the only other substantiated record for sub-Saharan Africa. A claim from Mauritania on 1 April 1988 (Lamarque 1988) was not accepted by Isenmann *et al.* (2010) as it was a single-observer record unsupported by a description. Ring-billed Gull is an increasing winter visitor to Western Europe, first recorded in the Azores in 1945, Spain in 1951, and the UK in 1973, with up to 100 individuals observed in the latter country per annum, e.g. in 1992 (Olsen & Larsson 2004). It was first reported in Morocco in 1982, with c.40 records to date (Thévenot *et al.* 2003, Bergier *et al.* 2011).

Acknowledgements

Chris Kehoe and Dominic Mitchell confirmed the identification, Otto Overdijk commented on the Mauritania record, Jason Waine kindly assisted with photographs, and Ron Demeijer and Tim Wacher provided useful comments on the first draft of the note.

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Received 23 April 2011; revision accepted 10 October 2011.